

The Applicant's Perspective on Urology Residency Interviews: A Qualitative Analysis

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Abstract:

Background:

While interviews are one of the main ways for applicants and programs to gain insight towards one another, there is little known about how applicants actually perceive the interview process. We conducted a large-scale analysis of anonymous online posts to better understand what applicants seek on interview day and what they care about in selecting a residency program.

Methods/Materials

We collected three years (2016-2018) of comments from the Interview Impressions tab of the Urology Match Google Sheet. Qualitative data analysis was performed using Grounded Theory Methodology as described by Charmaz. Two physicians (H.Z. and C.P.S.) independently coded the comments line by line. They generated and categorized preliminary themes based on similar codes and finally grouped the themes into categories.

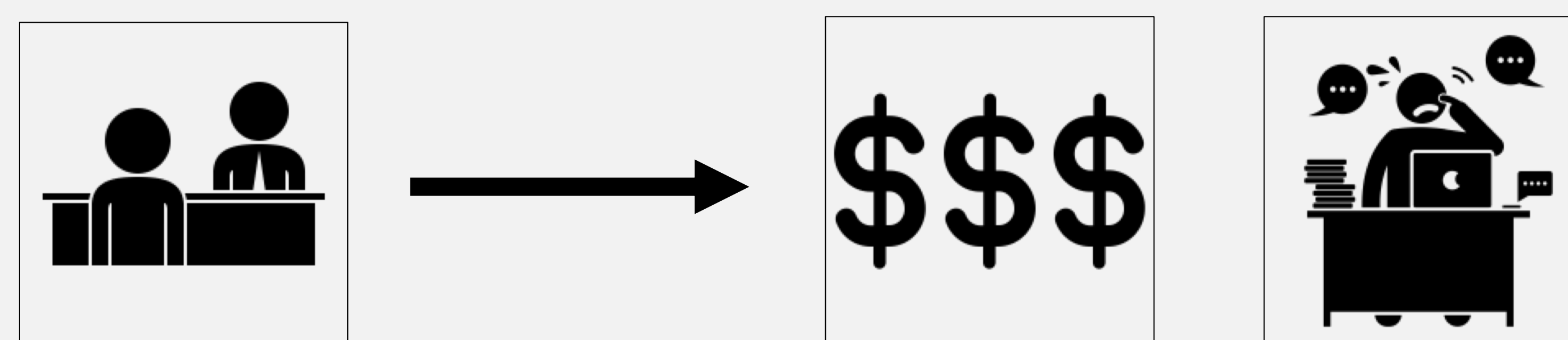
Results:

There were a total of 33,351 words for 133 residency programs in the analysis. We identified six thematic categories (Table 1). Although research was only discussed for 44% of the programs, the other categories were discussed for 77-86% of the programs. In general, we found that applicants prefer personable, well-prepared interviews and efficient interview days. Applicants also care about working with young and diverse fellowship-trained faculty across a wide breadth of subspecialties. They were easily able to discern the program culture and level of collegiality between residents and faculty. Applicants wanted a balance of surgical training with a focus on robotics and surgical autonomy, as well as time in the clinic setting. Not all applicants were interested in research but those who were expressed appreciation of a strong support system. Finally, additional program benefits and the positives and negatives of the program's location were frequently discussed.

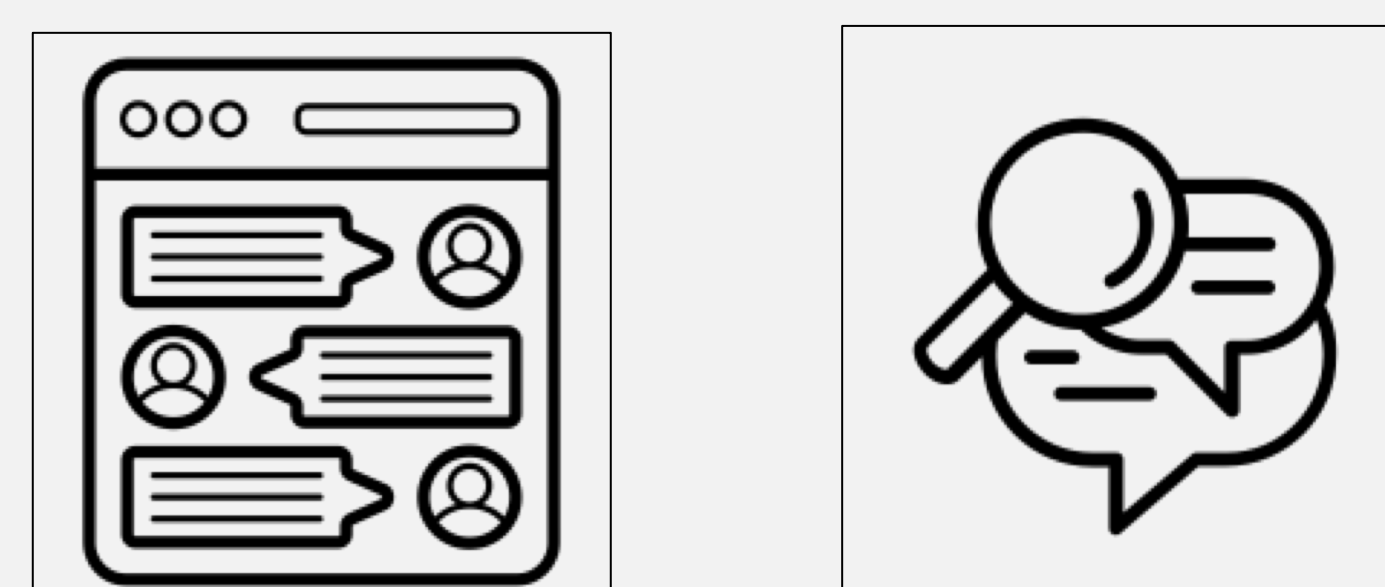
Conclusions:

Analysis of anonymous social media posts can help improve the interview process for applicants and programs alike. Programs can identify areas of improvement to attract top candidates as we better understand what applicants look for in a residency. Our findings provide a step toward the ultimate goal of improving the match process.

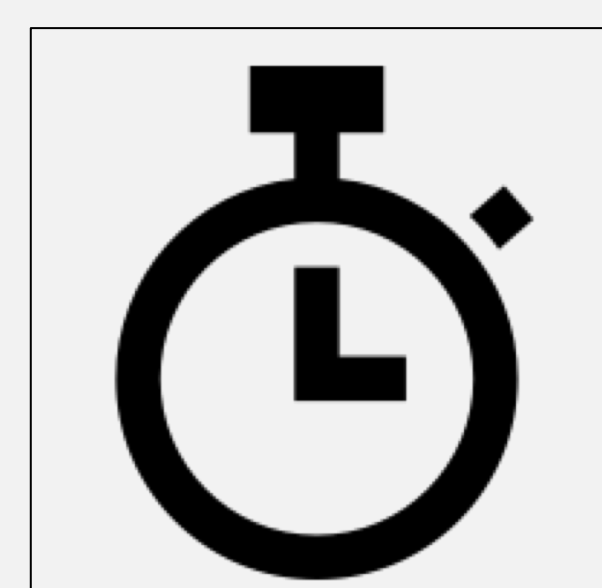
Urology residency interviews can be expensive and stressful. There is little known how applicants actually perceive the interview process.



We use grounded theory methodology to analyze an anonymous forum of urology applicants for the 2016 to 2018 application cycles



We identified six thematic categories related to what the applicants care about on interview day and what they look for in a residency program.



Efficiency and Structure of Interview Day



Diverse Fellowship Trained Faculty



Program Culture and Collegiality



Surgical and Clinical Training



Research



Program Benefits And Location

Representative Quotes

Efficiency and Structure of Interview Day:

"Horrendous interview and I was dreading each room coming up next. Didn't get to know us at all on a personal level"
"It was clear the faculty had read my application and asked specific questions from it"
"Terribly organized interview day where you sit in the room and they just pick you randomly. Will be waiting for hours on end to be called for your next interview. Lasts from 8AM - 4PM"
"Interviews well organized. fancy dinner night before and lots of great lunch and snacks out the whole day"
"Post interview social, only a few residents showed up. Attendings came too, it was very awkward"

Diverse, Fellowship Trained Faculty:

"Not a lot of fmrs or infertility"
"Young and accomplished attendings who are eager to teach residents and start projects"
"Expanding faculty -- new recon, just hired a new onc"
"Chair has brought in many young faculty who are very easy to work with and love to operate and teach. Almost all faculty are fellowship trained"

Program Culture and Collegiality

"There is a palpable political divide between attendings and even though the residents are great to get along with, many of them are unhappy"
"Residents are close knit and hang out a lot outside work"
"One resident called the program 'Traditional and hierarchical'"
"The residents barely speak up or ask questions"
"Program feels like a family"

Surgical and Clinical Training

"Most of the faculty are pretty hands off to the point where chiefs do most of the robotic cases"
"Very low robotic volume"
"PGY2s spend A LOT of time in clinic"
"Fellows do not poach cases"

Research

"Research block can be more operative heavy if research not your thing"
"Seems to be extremely weak on research. I brought up research and academics during my interview and the attendings did not seem interested"
"Tons of research support (statisticians generate methods section and stats)"
"Some residents have >10 first author pubs by the time they graduate"
"Research very available but not forced upon you"

Program Benefits and Location

"A lot of driving as they cover 4-5 different hospitals"
"...is a beautiful town with a low cost of living... many fun places within driving distance, great school districts, difficult town to be single in"
"Very expensive parking as resident"
"No loupes"

Images courtesy of <https://thenounproject.com/>